

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1523

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNSC, IS, LE, XF

SUBJ: POSTMORTEM ON LEBANESE SC COMPLAINT

1. OUTCOME OF LEBANESE COMPLAINT ON ISRAELI RAID SEEMS BETTER THAN COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED AFTER BRITISH AND OTHERS ABANDONED SPONSORSHIP OF ACCEPTABLE RES. SUCCESSFUL RESULT WAS DUE IN PART TO DEGREE OF LUCK, SOME ELEMENTS OF WHICH WE NOTE BELOW.

2. A GOOD SIGN THAT OUTCOME WAS SUCCESSFUL FROM US STANDPOINT IS THAT, HERE AT LEAST, BOTH PARTIES ARE SATISFIED THAT US MADE HONEST, VIGOROUS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE FAIR RESULT. ARABS ARE HAPPIEST, OF COURSE, AND REGARD OUR AFFIRMATIVE VOTE AS UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE OF MORE BALANCED US POSTURE. AT SAME TIME, ISRAELIS ARE AWARE THAT US FOUGHT EVERY INCH OF WAY FOR FAIREST POSSIBLE RESOLUTION DESPITE THEIR PUBLIC COMMENTS TO COUNCIL. PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON QIRYAT SHMONA AND BALANCED US STATEMENT HELPED, AS DID CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH GOI IN WASHINGTON, NEW YORK AND TEL AVIV. (ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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INSIGHT INTO AMB. TEKOAH'S ATTITUDE WAS PASSED ON TO

US BY NY TIMES CORRESPONDENT TELTSCH: WHEN PRESSED AS TO HIS VIEW OF US VOTE, TEKOAH REFUSED - UNCHARACTERISTICALLY - TO BE DRAWN INTO SO MUCH AS A GRUMBLE ON DEEP BACKGROUND.)

3. FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, IT WORTH NOTING THAT TEKOAH TOLD US BEFORE MEETING HE WOULD PREFER DRAFT EVENTUALLY APPROVED, WITH SINGLE ADDITION OF QIRYAT SHMONA, TO THE TOUGH NON-ALIGNED DRAFT WITH LARGE NUMBER OF ABSTENTIONS. NATURALLY, FIRST CHOICE FOR ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE BEEN US VETO.

4. AS FOR ARAB ATTITUDE, ARAB DELS HERE HAVE LOOKED AT US VOTE ALMOST ENTIRELY IN CONTEXT OF SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING TRIP TO ME. THEY CLAIMED TO BE CONCERNED THAT US VETO - OR ABSTENTION ON A "REASONABLE" RESOLUTION - WOULD JEOPARDIZE SECRETARY'S ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT. FONMIN FAHMI, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD BRITISH THAT IF US WERE FORCED TO VETO OR WERE PUT IN POSITION OF ISOLATION, SOME WAY HAD TO BE FOUND TO POSTPONE VOTE UNTIL AFTER SECRETARY'S TRIP.

5. LUCK PLAYED A PART IN FINAL OUTCOME IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, HAD LEBANESE NOT ASKED TO HAVE ADDITIONAL PARA INSERTED RE ISRAELI FORCES ON LEBANESE SOIL, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE IN GOOD FAITH FOR US TO HAVE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO AGREED RES. (INCIDENTALLY, AT ELEVENTH HOUR, WHILE DEBATE WAS IN PROGRESS, UKUN RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO COSPONSOR RES WITH REFERENCE TO QIRYAT SHMONA IF LEBANESE AGREED. LEBANESE TURNED THEM DOWN FLATLY.) SECOND PIECE OF LUCK WAS THAT WEO RATHER THAN NON-ALIGNED DRAFT WAS TABLED FIRST. IF NON-ALIGNED HAD BEEN MORE MILITANT, OR COMPLAINANT HAD BEEN OTHER THAN LEBANON, NON-ALIGNED DRAFT WOULD SURELY HAVE HAD PRIORITY. AS IF WAS, SC PRES SHIBIB SEEMS TO HAVE WAVERED BETWEEN JOINT US-UK-AUSTRALIAN REQUEST THAT HE PUT FORWARD NON-SPONSORED RES AND BYELORUSSIAN AND MAURITANIAN INSISTENCE THAT HE NOT DO SO. LEBANESE SEEM TO HAVE TURNED TIDE BY OPTING FOR FORMER.

6. WE LEARNED ONCE AGAIN FROM THIS EXERCISE HOW HARD
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IT IS TO SPLIT NON-ALIGNED. NO NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY COULD BE PERSUADED TO COSPONSOR WITH FRENCH EVEN THOUGH SOME WERE CLEARLY SYMPATHETIC. ALSO, WHEN WE TRIED TO GET VOTES FOR 24 HOUR ADJOURNMENT, MANY NON-ALIGNED WERE INDIVIDUALLY AGREEABLE, BUT COLLECTIVELY OPPOSED.

7. IN FUTURE ARAB-ISRAELI QUESTIONS, WE WILL WANT TO

BEAR IN MIND BRITISH LABOR GOVT'S RELATIVELY PRO-ISRAEL
POSTURE. UKUN'S OFF-THE-RECORD ESTIMATE IS THAT HMG WOULD
NEVER HAVE VOTED FOR THE PRESENT RESOLUTION HAD THE
FOREIGN OFFICE NOT GOT ITSELF OUT ON A LIMB VERY EARLY
BY AUTHORIZING COSPONSORSHIP.
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